



Paper 51

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DEC 08 2004

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of
Robert A. Murgita
Application No. 08/879,469
Filed: June 20, 1997
Attorney Docket No.: 06727/006001

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: **DECISION ON PETITION**
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This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a), filed July 30, 2004, to revive the above-identified application.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

Any request for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within TWO (2) MONTHS from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a)" or "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b)." This is not a final agency decision.

This application became abandoned on June 24, 2003, for failure to pay the issue fee in response to the Notice of Allowance mailed March 21, 2003 and which set a three (3) month period for reply. Accordingly, a Notice of Abandonment was mailed March 31, 2004.

Petitioner asserts that the Notice of Allowance was mailed to an incorrect address.

A grantable petition to revive an abandoned application under 37 CFR 1.137(a) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional application filed on or after June 8, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof;

- (2) the petition fee as set forth in § 1.17(l);
- (3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to this paragraph was unavoidable; and
- (4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in § 1.20(d)) required pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section.

This petition lacks items (3) above.

With regard to item (3), decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of "unavoidable" delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

The word 'unavoidable' . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.¹

The showing of record is inadequate to establish unavoidable delay within the meaning of 37 CFR 1.137(a). Specifically, an application is "unavoidably" abandoned only where petitioner, or counsel for petitioner, takes all action necessary for a proper response to the outstanding Office action, but through the intervention of unforeseen circumstances, such as failure of mail, telegraph, telefacsimile, or the negligence of otherwise reliable employees, the response is not timely received in the Office.²

Petitioner asserts that a "Request for Customer Number Data Change" was submitted March 14, 2002 specifically to change the correspondence address associated with

¹In *re* Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912)(quoting *Ex parte Pratt*, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also *Winkler v. Ladd*, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), *aff'd*, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); *Ex parte Henrich*, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a "case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account." *Smith v. Mossinghoff*, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was "unavoidable." *Haines v. Quigg*, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

²*Ex parte Pratt*, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31 (Comm'r Pat. 1887).

customer number 21559 and thus all applications associated with that customer number. By way of example, petitioner submits a copy of the "Request" and that of two other customer numbers for which a similar request was submitted on the same day.

A review of the record reveals that while the "Request for Customer Number Data Change" was also submitted for customer numbers 31,020 and 30,091, the record reveals that on those forms the box for changing the address was actually checked thus indicating the desired request. However, in the case of the "Request" for customer number 21559, the box wasn't checked.

For the purposes of whether the act of submitting the "Request" without having checked the box for changing the correspondence address, it can't be assumed that the "Request" filed for customer number 21559 on March 14, 2002 was for changing the correspondence address and thus does not reach the level of unavoidable delay. The additional evidence submitted is in the form of correspondence between the USPTO and the petitioner and was submitted to show the continued efforts on the part of the petitioner to correct data for customer number 21559 which would include the address associated with that customer number. However, those efforts were all after the date the Notice of Allowance and Notice of Allowability were mailed and can't therefore be used to show that the petitioner "acted diligently to update the correspondence address in the present application", prior to the date the Notices were mailed, as was indicated in the petition.

The sequence of events are unfortunate but the showing presented is insufficient to establish unavoidable delay within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 133 and 37 CFR 1.137(a), and the petition will be dismissed.

ALTERNATIVE VENUE

Petitioner may wish to consider filing a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b),³

³Effective December 1, 1997, the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) now provide that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b). A grantable petition filed under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional application filed on or after June 8, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof. In an application abandoned for failure to pay the publication fee, the required reply must include payment of the publication fee.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(m);

(3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing

which now provides that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b).

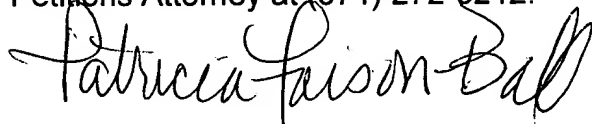
The filing of a petition under the unintentional standard cannot be intentionally delayed and therefore should be filed promptly. A person seeking revival due to unintentional delay cannot make a statement that the delay was unintentional unless the entire delay, including the delay from the date it was discovered that the application was abandoned until the filing of the petition to revive under 37 CFR 1.137(b), was unintentional. A statement that the delay was unintentional is not appropriate if petitioner intentionally delayed the filing of a petition for revival under 37 CFR 1.137(b).

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Mail Stop Petitions
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria VA 22313-1450

By FAX: (703)308-6916
Attn: Office of Petitions

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned Petitions Attorney at (571) 272-3212.



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of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional; and

(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).